

COUNCIL POLICY**CURRENT**

SUBJECT: PARK AND RECREATION FACILITY LANDSCAPE DESIGN
POLICY NO.: 200-14
EFFECTIVE DATE: August 24, 1981

BACKGROUND:

The City of San Diego has a large number of landscaped park and recreation facilities, and additional facilities will be required to serve the City's increasing population. The cost of development and maintenance of these facilities continues to rise while there is a concurrent reduction in financing available for this purpose. There is also an increased awareness of the need to promote user safety in these facilities and to conserve diminishing water and energy resources. This Council Policy provides direction for the design, or redesign, of landscaped areas which will meet community needs within the limits of available resources.

PURPOSE:

To provide policy guidance to City staff and design consultants relative to the landscape design of general park and recreation facilities.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the City Council that landscaping for new facilities, and the improvement or redevelopment of existing facilities, be designed in a manner that will assure user safety and facility function, reduce water and energy use, and reduce construction and maintenance costs through conformance with the following guidelines.

DESIGN GUIDELINES:**I. Landscaping - General**

- a. High maintenance, water demanding landscaping will be limited to those areas where such improvement is essential.
- b. Each facility should be designed to retain significant existing native or naturalized plant growth, if any, consistent with intended use of the facility and the other requirements of this policy.

II. Visual Access

- a. Site grading, the location of park furnishings, structures and plantings must permit adequate visual access into the entire site from an adjacent public thoroughfare, building or parking lot.

III. Grading - Drainage

- a. Site grading shall be accomplished in such a manner as to reduce steep grades and/or eliminate unnecessary grade changes.

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- b. Adequate drainage must be provided particularly for active use areas.

IV. Irrigation Systems

- a. Irrigation systems will be automated and designed to apply water at a rate which will minimize runoff.
- b. Irrigation systems for non-turfed, but planted areas, will be operated by a controller that is independent from units that control turf area irrigation.
- c. The most effective and readily available vandal/theft resistant components will be utilized.

V. Lighting

- a. Area and parking lot lighting will be provided where ambient light from adjacent areas is inadequate for user safety and convenience.
- b. Lighting for athletic areas will be provided at a minimum level consistent with user safety and intended use.
- c. Energy efficient fixtures will be utilized.
- d. Automatic controls, with convenient manual override, will be provided.
- e. Athletic area lighting will be operated by controls which do not operate other lighting systems.

VI. Furnishings and Fixtures

- a. Avoid the use of “custom” designed park furnishings and fixtures, i.e., picnic facilities, benches, drinking fountains, lighting fixtures, play and athletic equipment, etc., except in unique and special situations.
- b. Avoid the use of wooden bollards, fences, barricades, walls, play equipment and other “timber” structures.
- c. The use of vandal resistant materials and installation methods are required.
- d. Park furnishings located in turf shall be limited in number and so spaced as to permit the effective use of mechanized maintenance equipment and the effective operation of the irrigation system.
- e. Park structures, fixtures and furnishings located in turf areas will be provided with a concrete pad or footing flush with the adjacent turf and sufficiently wide to permit efficient turf maintenance.
- f. Locate children’s play apparatus in informal groupings in non-turfed areas. Avoid the use of formalized enclosures and a sand base. Limit apparatus to basic equipment such as slides, swings and climbers.

VII. Native/Naturalized Plantings

- a. The restoration of natural areas disturbed by site development with native or naturalized plantings, in a manner which will require minimal maintenance, including irrigation, is encouraged, if consistent with the intended use of the facility and the other requirements of this policy.
- b. Plant material will be selected that will provide a “natural” succession of plants designed to provide initial surface stabilization followed by a permanent, long lived plant community.

VIII. Turf

- a. Turf plantings will be generally limited to areas where required for functional use.
- b. Turf areas should be of a size and configuration to permit the most effective use of mechanized maintenance equipment and reduce turf edging.
- c. Turf areas should terminate at the inside edge of perimeter walks wherever possible.
- d. Concrete mowing strips are required at the interface of turf area with shrub or groundcover plantings.
- e. Athletic fields will be turfed only if they are multi-sports fields. Single use baseball fields and softball fields will not be turfed. Baseball infields will not be turfed.

IX. Trees and Shrubs

- a. Plant selection shall be limited to those species which are considered to be relatively disease and pest free, and require minimal trimming to be maintained in a safe and attractive condition.
- b. Drought tolerant species should be utilized where practical, particularly in non-turfed areas.
- c. Planting locations and spacing will permit normal plant development without undue crowding or trimming. Plant symbols on drawings and general development plans will be in scale with the mature size of the species proposed.
- d. Trees planted in turfed areas will be spaced to permit the most effective use of mechanized maintenance equipment and operation of the irrigation system.
- e. Dense tree groves should be excluded from turfed areas. Where planted, the soil surface under such groves must be mulched with a wood chip product or equal.
- f. Shrub plantings will not be permitted except where required, i.e., for safety, and to screen objectionable views.
- g. Foundation planting of park and recreation buildings is prohibited, except in unique design situations.

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X. Groundcover

- a. Living groundcovers will be permitted only where absolutely necessary to control surface erosion.
- b. Plant selection must be limited to low maintenance species.
- c. Drought tolerant species should be utilized where practical.

XI. Non-Planted Areas

- a. Non-planted areas must be covered with mulch, wood chip product, decomposed granite or other material suitable for the intended use of the area.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- I. Landscape design will conform to the guidelines listed above.
- II. General development plans for the landscaping of new facilities, or significant redevelopment of existing facilities, will be approved by the Park and Recreation Board, its appropriate subcommittees and the Public Facilities and Recreation Committee of the City Council prior to the preparation of construction documents or implementation of City force landscaping projects. The Police Department will advise the Park and Recreation Department staff relative to the public safety aspects of the proposed design.
- III. It is understood that deviation from specific sections of the guidelines due to special site conditions and/or use considerations may be required. However, such deviations must be fully justified and approved at the time of general plan approval.
- IV. Staff will assure that detailed construction documents are prepared in a manner consistent with this policy and the approved general plan.

CROSS REFERENCE:

City Charter Sec. 55
Municipal Code Sec. 63.01
Council Policy 200-05

HISTORY:

Adopted by Resolution R-254869 08/24/1981